

EXHIBIT 4

DATE 1-29-07

#B 2

Jan 29 Testimony to Subcommittee on Financing
For Foster and Adoptive Children through Dphhs

Madam Chair and Committee members, for the record, my name is Nancy Marks. I operate a small ranch at Townsend and several years ago I fostered then adopted two children who were several emotionally disturbed from past abuse and neglect. The department, social workers and family resource persons alike, have worked with me since 2000 to help me parent these badly abused children. One FRS has been through thick and thin with us since then, and continues to support and advise us.

Both of these children have needed extensive services: one in both Shodair and Intermountain Children's Home, and the other now in Shodair. The department has done its level best to provide guidance and services for this child, but alas, no specific services for our family's needs are available in Montana. In October I spent \$1200 to travel to a national conference on children who have been sexually abused, to find a treatment program and services for my child. I am now trying to find financial aid to get my child treatment long term, since Medicaid will not pay for those services.

I thank the department for its past help with raising my children. The social workers and the family resource people have done an excellent job, in so far as time allowed. However, we need more help in that department. In Region IV alone, we have so few family resource people, that we who know the system end up doing a lot of the work alone. Please consider funding for more social workers to fill these needed spots.

I need monetary help, along with Medicaid subsidy, because I must pay for my own therapy and most of the cost of traveling to the children's and my group and individual therapy – as many as 5 hours per week. I do receive a stipend for travel - \$10 per trip. That hardly covers the costs of the used car I had to buy to get better mileage and the \$700 a month gas bill I have accrued during these months of therapy.

As a single mother raising adopted children, I feel honored to do the work, to be available 24/7 and to love them. I cannot do the work alone. I need respite and I need therapy.

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Should I not get services, and fail with these children, then they go back into the system and age out in foster homes that will ultimately cost the state endless amounts of money.

I have dedicated my life and my resources to these children: please help me by raising the subsidy and post adoptive services rates to help us succeed as a family.

When they reach age 18, the department is out of the picture. I intend to be there for them through college, marriage and grandchildren, for a lifetime. Please consider my situation and the many other foster and adoptive parents in Montana as you deliberate whether to increase subsidized adoption rates, transportation rates and respite hours.

Thank you for your time and work.

Nancy Marks
3597 Hwy 284
Townsend, MT 59644
266-3710
mtskydog@mt.net